

Appendix A: The Two Phases of the Second Coming

As promised, we will continue our focus on the distinction which exists between “the day of the Lord” and “the day of Christ” as to the impact it can have on our understanding of the two phases of the Second Coming. First, “the day of Christ” is easier to evaluate due to its occurrence in only the New Testament, on six specific occasions (1 Corinthians 1:8, 5:5; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 1:6, 1:10, 2:16). Paul’s use of this terminology in Philippians is especially helpful in that the exact expression occurs in both 1:10 and 2:16. Paul does include the name of Jesus in 1:6 but in comparison with 1:10, the reference must be to the same “day.” The uniqueness of this day, as well as its purpose, establishes it as distinct from “the day of the Lord.” It is an event that pertains exclusively to the Church, and not the nation of Israel. Therefore, “the day of Christ” can refer to nothing other than the Rapture, concluding the Church Age and initiating the 70th week of Daniel’s prophecy. As we have previously established, Daniel’s 70th week is the seven-year period of Tribulation, depicted in Revelation chapters 6-19. Based on Revelation 19:11-21, we can also confirm that Phase Two of the Second Coming, Christ’s literal and physical return to earth; will bring the Tribulation period to a dramatic and triumphant conclusion.

So how does the expression “the day of the Lord” factor into our understanding of the Second Coming and its placement in God’s prophetic calendar of events? A survey of all the relevant references to “the day of the Lord” creates an expanded view of its duration. We can know for certain that “the day of the Lord” originates with the Tribulation period (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3) and must include the Second Coming/Phase Two. This overview also reveals the chief characteristic of that “day.” The common thread that runs through each passage is that of God’s wrath being poured out in judgment, in a manner that is both unprecedented and monumental (Joel 2:1-2; Zephaniah 1:14-18). But determining the end point of this “day” with certainty is a more difficult matter. Nevertheless, there is one key passage that is helpful in determining the extent to which “the day of the Lord” will last, namely 2 Peter 3:10-13 –

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat! But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.”

This statement harmonizes perfectly with Revelation 21:1 and necessitates the following conclusion regarding the timeframe for “the day of the Lord.” It will begin with the Tribulation, involve the Second Coming of our Savior, embracing His Millennial Reign on earth (Revelation 20:1-10), the Great White Throne Judgment of God (Revelation 20:11-15); and will continue until the ushering in of the new heavens and new earth, with the unveiling of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:1-10). At which point, “the day of the Lord” reaches its completion and fulfillment.

There will be a bonus post on Saturday, March 12; entitled: “Balanced Biblical Ministry”